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STATE FOR NEA/MAG AND PM/PPA - RACHEL FEATHERSTONE

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SUBJECT: MOROCCO'S PARTICIPATION IN COESPU

REF: STATE 77527

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1. (SBU) Poloff met June 12 with MFA Bilateral Affairs Officer Karim Halim to encourage Moroccan participation in the next round of COESPU courses. Poloff explained, for the first time and in part based on Moroccan suggestion, COESPU will offer its courses in French taught by instructors from the French Gendarmerie. Halim, while generally favorable to the new development, posed several questions he said would need to be resolved before he could provide a substantive response, including: How many French and English language slots are available for Morocco? How long will each course last? If Morocco can not fully fund its candidates, would U.S. funding assistance cover all associated costs in addition to travel? What countries would be included in a Mobile Assistance Team? (Comment: Halim's inquiries, while legitimate, are likely a tactic to provide additional time to obtain a coordinated GOM response on COESPU participation. End Comment.)

2. (SBU) On June 14, Italian DCM Luca Fratini told Polcouns that the Italian Embassy in Rabat had sent an official note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on June 13 that answered many of Halim's questions. (NB: As of June 18, the MFA had yet to respond to the Italian message.) Fratini explained, from the Italian point of view, the GOM's largest obstacle to COESPU participation has been removed and Morocco should reciprocate with maximum participation. The Italian Embassy also plans to encourage Moroccan attendance via its Defense Attache, added Fratini. Post will report further responses septel.

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